

Silicon Valley Essential Secondary School Application for Charter School Planning Phase Grant

ABSTRACT

We know from experience that many students fare well in large comprehensive high schools, developing the skills and capabilities necessary to succeed in post-high school pursuits. But we also know that many students are not successful – and that a disproportionate number of this latter group are students of color. Further, many students who receive honorable grades are not engaged by school and do not feel connected to it. And finally, we know that all students do not learn in the same way. Given the size and structure of large comprehensive high schools, it is difficult (perhaps impossible) for teachers to know all of their students well enough to effectively identify and address their differing learning needs and styles (Meier, 1999).

Our purpose in proposing the Silicon Valley Essential Secondary School (SVESS) is to provide an option for families within the Fremont Union High School District (FUHSD) that complements the existing high schools and enhances the overall capacity of the community to meet the varying needs of its students. Specifically, we propose the following:

- To establish a *small school, serving the full range of students, explicitly designed to foster a high degree of personalization in connection with a standards-driven curriculum and authentic pedagogy*. In so doing we will contribute to all students meeting the high standards expected of them, thus raising performance levels overall and eliminating performance differentials for students of color.
- To establish a school where *ongoing learning and continuous improvement are the norm for the whole school – for adults as well as for students*. In so doing we will develop new models for both preservice and inservice teacher preparation as well as new models for teacher career paths.

Translating these principles into practice involves fundamental changes in the relationships between and among students, teachers, and curriculum, and in the organizational structures, practices, and culture of the school. It cannot be accomplished through incremental improvements and changes that leave the core structures and practices intact (c.f., Cuban, 1988; Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Conley, 1997). The California Charter Schools Act (as revised by AB544 and AB2417) provides an opportunity to effect such changes, thus increasing the educational opportunities provided to students.

We have assembled of team of individuals with experience and expertise in standards and curriculum reform, authentic pedagogy, educational planning, finance and administration, professional development, and evaluation/accountability to plan and implement the proposed charter school. Initial planning tasks will include:

- Develop, market, and achieve approval for the Charter School proposal
- Identify a potential location for the proposed Charter School
- Develop community support for the proposed Charter School
- Develop a budget and business plan to ensure the economic viability of the Charter School

Silicon Valley Essential Secondary School Charter School Planning Phase Grant -- Application Narrative

I. EDUCATIONAL VISION

A. Baseline Information

Community to be Served by the School. The Fremont Union High School District (FUHSD) serves approximately 8,865 students in the cities of Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and Los Altos – the heart of Silicon Valley. There are currently five large comprehensive high schools in the district. All of the current high schools are located in the southern and western areas of the district (specifically, south and west of El Camino Real). The proposed charter school, Silicon Valley Essential Secondary School (SVESS) will enhance the district's offerings by providing a school that by design is small, emphasizing depth of personalization over breadth of offerings. Further, by locating the school in the northern part of the district, the district will better serve students in the North Sunnyvale area.

Home to a number of high-tech firms and new growth industries as well as local businesses and educational institutions, the Sunnyvale community is characterized by considerable social and economic diversity. Over one third of the residents belong to a racial or ethnic minority group, with Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics most prominent (19% and 13%, respectively). While one adult in six (15%) has obtained a graduate degree, approximately one in three (34%) have not obtained a high school diploma. Household income levels range from over \$100,000/year (21%) to less than \$15,000/year (8%). There is broad support for education and educational reform within this community: both Homestead and Fremont high schools are members of the Coalition of Essential Schools and the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative; Homestead has been and Fremont continues to be a leadership school in the Collaborative. Parents within this community have high aspirations for their children, and thus high expectations for the schools. They expect to see rigorous curriculum reflecting high standards. At the same time, many students and parents also want a more personalized and supportive learning experience, to help their students can meet those high standards.

Student Demographic and Academic Performance. The FUHSD student population reflects the socioeconomic diversity of the community. Across the five high schools approximately 58% are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, predominantly Asian (38%) and Hispanic (12%). Approximately 12.5% of students have limited English proficiency, and approximately 10% qualify for special education services. Students also vary markedly in terms of their academic performance. While many students in the district overall achieve GPAs of 3.0 or higher, approximately one in six (17%) have GPAs lower than 2.0, indicating that they are getting Ds or Fs in the majority of their courses. For individual schools the proportion of students with a GPA lower than 2.0 can be as high as 29%; for students of color, the proportions are even higher.

SVESS Target Population. Our goal is to serve a small but diverse population of students that reflects the surrounding community. We will strive to develop a student body that is racially and ethnically diverse, including LEP and FEP students as well as mainstreamed Special Education students. We anticipate that some students will be high performers in their current settings, but desirous of a smaller and more personalized learning environment; we also anticipate that some

students will not be succeeding in their current settings, and look for greater success in a smaller and more personalized environment.

B. Educational Vision

We believe that the purpose of education is to prepare all students to use their minds well and to empower them to be active and contributing participants in a democratic society. In a country in which children's experiences outside of school vary so dramatically and in which all children will eventually help direct our future, we must ensure that schools provide all students with the skills and capabilities necessary to live productive, socially useful and personally satisfying lives.

While many students fare well in large comprehensive high schools, developing the skills and capabilities necessary to succeed in post-high school pursuits, many others do not - and a disproportionate number of this latter group are students of color. We also know that many of those students who receive honorable grades are not engaged by school and do not feel connected to it. Further, we know that all students do not learn in the same way. Given the size and structure of large comprehensive high schools, it is difficult (perhaps impossible) for teachers to know all of their students well enough to effectively identify and address their differing learning needs and styles. As Debbie Meier (founding principal of Mission Hill Elementary School and Central Park East Secondary School) recently observed, if schools are failing to meet the needs of children it is because they are "too distant, too big, too standardized, and too uniform to respond to the particulars of each child and each community" (Meier, 1999).

Three core principles will guide the educational program at SVESS: personalization, outcomes and standards, and authentic pedagogy. Each is elaborated below.

Personalization.). Increasingly, research is documenting the greater effectiveness of small schools and more personalized learning environments in meeting students learning needs (Raywid, 1997-98; Rotherham, 1999). School size (small) has been identified as a critical factor in promoting personalization and student achievement, in that it "permits and invites a number of practices and arrangements that have independently been found desirable" (Raywid, 1997-98, p. 36). Because teachers will know their students well, they will be able to design learning experiences and supports that address students' needs and respond to students' learning styles. Further, research has also documented the importance of the learning environment in the academic performance of students of color: in an environment of trust and confidence, minority students perform as well as or better than white students (Steele, 1999; Triesman, 1999). Our experience over the past several years supports these findings: the quality of learning is substantially different in smaller, more personalized, learning environments.

To achieve the goal of personalization, teams of teachers will work with small groups of students that they share in common. Class sizes will be small (on average, 25 students) with provision for even smaller groupings for seminars. Because they share students in common, teachers can share information about students and student performance and progress; where appropriate, they can develop strategies for better supporting or further challenging students in their learning. Close relationships will thus be established among students, between students and teachers, and with

parents. Parents are considered an integral part of the educational process, and communication with parents will be both frequent and substantive. In addition, each student will be assigned an adult mentor who will closely monitor the student's progress as well as play an advisory role.

Outcomes and Standards. All students graduating from SVESS will be expected to demonstrate the following:

- Mastery of essential skills and areas of knowledge (as reflected in state- and district-approved content standards)
- Clear, critical, and creative thinking
- Effective oral, written, and visual communication
- Effective independent and collaborative work habits
- Workplace readiness skills

These outcomes and associated performance standards will provide the foundation for curriculum and instructional practice designed to ensure that all students are prepared to meet the standards. Further, these outcomes and standards will be clearly articulated to students and parents; they will provide the basis for student assessment and progress reporting as well as for student intervention and support. Staff at SVESS recognize that simply having high standards and expectations for students is not sufficient, that a key aspect of accountability involves what we will do when students are not meeting a standard (Singleton, 1998).

Authentic Pedagogy. Teaching and learning at SVESS will emphasize authentic pedagogy - teaching that requires students to think, to develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems (Newman and Wehlage, 1995, p. 3). In so doing, we will also draw heavily on the common principles of the *Coalition of Essential Schools*. These principles place emphasis on the nature of the learning experience, and on the relationships between the student, the teacher, and the curriculum, rather than on specific strategies *per se* (e.g., use of portfolios, cooperative learning). Research has shown that such authentic pedagogy not only enhances student achievement overall, it also – given equal access – reduces inequalities in achievement between students of high and low socioeconomic status (Newman and Wehlage, 1995).

Specific educational objectives. Our purpose in proposing the Silicon Valley Essential Secondary School (SVESS) is to provide an option for families within FUHSD that complements the existing high schools and enhances the overall capacity of the community to meet the varying needs of its students. Specifically, we propose the following:

- To establish a *small school, serving the full range of students, explicitly designed to foster a high degree of personalization in connection with a standards-driven curriculum and authentic pedagogy.* In so doing we will contribute to all students meeting the high standards expected of them, thus raising performance levels overall and eliminating performance differentials for students of color.
- To establish a Professional Development School where *ongoing learning and continuous improvement are the norm for adults as well as for students.* In so doing we will develop new models for both preservice and inservice teacher preparation as well as new models for teacher career paths.

Translating these principles into practice involves fundamental changes in the relationships between and among students, teachers, and curriculum, and in the organizational structures,

practices, and culture of the school. It cannot be accomplished through incremental improvements and changes that leave the core structures and practices intact (c.f., Cuban, 1988; Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Conley, 1997). By relaxing many of the regulations currently governing California schools, the California Charter Schools Act (as revised by AB544 and AB2417) provides an opportunity to effect such changes. By incorporating a small charter school in its offerings, FUHSD will significantly enhance the educational opportunities available to its students. In so doing, this district will make it easier for all students to find learning environments in which they can be successful. By becoming a Professional Development School, SVESS will significantly enhance the opportunities available to teachers as well.

II. DESCRIPTION OF GRANT PROJECT GOALS AND ACTIVITIES FOR APPROVAL OF A CHARTER PROPOSAL

A. Grant Project Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this planning effort will be to develop a charter school proposal for submission to the Fremont Union High School District Board of Trustees for approval. The specific objectives and work products in support of this goal are as follows:

- Become **more informed** about charter school policy and practice by participating in conferences and workshops and by investigating and visiting already-established schools.
- **Engage the community** in the planning process through a series of community forums and by adding at least one parent to the planning team (see below).
- Establish a **partnership relationship** with the Stanford University Teacher Education Program, as a basis for SVESS becoming a Professional Development School.
- Develop an **education plan** outlining the proposed student outcomes, assessment procedures, and curriculum.
- Develop a **school operations/management plan** encompassing the proposed staffing, location and facility, calendar and schedule, and governance structures.
- Develop a **student achievement accountability plan** including criteria for student performance, indicators/measures of program success, and assessment/reporting plans.
- Develop a **business plan** identifying anticipated revenues and budgeted expenditures as well as agreements to be negotiated with the district.
- Compile this information and these documents into a **charter school proposal**.

To carry out this work, we have assembled Core Planning Team comprising seven individuals with experience and expertise in standards and curriculum reform, authentic pedagogy, educational planning, finance and administration, professional development, and evaluation/accountability to plan and implement the proposed charter school (see Knowledge and Experience of Developers, below).

B. Identification of Planning Needs for the Development of an Effective School

1. Educational Capacity

Innovative Strategies and Proven Methods of Teaching and Learning. Members of the Core Planning Team have extensive involvement and experience in both the theory and practice of school reform, with particular emphasis on the processes of teaching and learning. Among the

methods of teaching and learning that team members currently incorporate in the classroom are interdisciplinary instruction, project-based learning, reciprocal teaching, Socratic seminars, simulations, and extended field studies. As we develop the overall curriculum structure for SVESS and begin to map out curriculum for each level we will continue to employ strategies such as these. In addition, through ongoing professional development activities and exchanges with colleagues we will continue to explore innovative methods of engaging students in learning and encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning.

Clear and Measurable Outcomes for Student Performance. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment at SVESS will be aligned around a clearly-articulated set of learner outcomes and associated performance standards. A preliminary set of learner outcomes was identified above (see Educational Vision). As part of the planning process we will seek input from community members to validate and refine these outcomes and to develop performance standards that defining essential elements of each domain (what students should know and be able to do) and the expected level(s) of performance. A corresponding set of benchmarks will also be developed to document student progress toward meeting those outcomes and standards.

Student Assessment. SVESS will feature a multi-level system of criterion-referenced student assessment, organized around the learner outcomes and standards. At the ***curriculum unit or project level***, rubrics will identify the specific standards to be met relating to each of the schoolwide learning outcomes. Student work will be evaluated in terms of these standards, and students will receive feedback describing their performance relative to these standards. Periodic ***progress reporting*** will provide information on students' performance and progress relative to these standards. Through student self-assessments and student-led parent conferences students will have opportunities to reflect with parents and teachers on their work and progress.

Summative assessments of student proficiency will be based on demonstrated work.

- At the foundation level students will maintain a ***portfolio*** that documents students' work and progress relative to each of the schoolwide outcomes. This portfolio will provide the basis for a student-led conferences described above. At the conclusion of the second year (or other time, as deemed appropriate), students might formally present their portfolio to a panel who will attest that they have met the foundation benchmarks and qualify to advance to the upper level.
- At the upper level students will continue to maintain their portfolio, documenting progress and proficiency relative to each of the graduation standards. Preparatory to graduation they will present a ***senior exhibition*** based on the portfolio, a series of issues papers, an internship, or a senior project.

Students demonstrating proficiency relative to each of these outcomes will receive a special "diploma of mastery".

In addition to these competency-based assessments, SVESS students will participate in ***state- and district-level assessments*** (e.g., STAR, high school exit tests, competency tests).

Professional Development. Establishing a culture of ***reflection on practice and continuous improvement*** will be one of the key operating principles at SVESS. Staff will be trained in the practices of action research and peer coaching, and a substantial portion of the schoolwide planning and staff development time (see Design, below) will be devoted to these activities.

We are exploring with the Stanford University Teacher Education Program (STEP) the feasibility of becoming a ***professional development school***. Through this relationship SVESS staff will have the opportunity to collaborate with STEP faculty on the training of new professionals, on the development of more professional roles for veteran teachers, and on research and inquiry designed to strengthen both practice and theory (Darling-Hammond, 1998). In particular, staff will be assisted in preparing for ***certification*** by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Finally, staff will be encouraged and supported to participate in ***professional conferences*** such as the Coalition Fall Forum and the ASCD annual meetings, in addition to subject-area conferences. In particular, staff will be expected to share information on their work and their learnings, through writings and presentations.

Resources to be used for the above

1. Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools (BayCES)
2. Santa Clara County Charter School Network
3. California Network of Educational Charters
4. Charter School Development Center
5. Stanford University Teacher Education Program (STEP)
6. Western Assessment Collaborative
7. Visits to current and planned charter schools and professional development schools (Frances W. Parker School, International Studies Academy, Leadership High School, Ixcalli School, the Preuss School, High Tech High)

2. Business and Organizational Management Capacity of the School

Comprehensive Design which Supports Educational Vision. We are proposing a school that by design is small, emphasizing depth of personalization over breadth of offerings. When fully enrolled, the school will serve approximately 400 students – approximately 200 at the foundation level (grades 9-10), and 200 at the upper level (grades 11-12). Included in this student population will be LEP and FEP students as well as mainstreamed Special Education students. We plan to begin by enrolling students at the 9th and 10th grade levels, adding a grade in each of the two subsequent years so that in the third year the school will be operating at full capacity. Following are preliminary plans for the overall curriculum, organization and structure, and schedule of the school. As part of the planning process we will investigate how other small schools have organized and are operating, as a basis for refining and elaborating these plans.

Curriculum. The overall curriculum will consist of a core foundation program at grades 9-10, followed by a more advanced program at grades 11-12. The ***foundation-level*** curriculum will include a core English-Social Studies-Art component, as well as Math (Algebra, Geometry), Science (Physics, Biology), Modern Language, and Physical Education. Technology will be infused throughout the curriculum. The ***upper level*** curriculum will also feature an English/Social Studies core plus advanced math and science courses featuring in-depth study in more specialized areas. At both levels, classroom instruction will be enhanced through the use of real-world experts as guest speakers and through field trips and applied field studies. ***Advanced study*** in the Arts, Technology, and Modern Language would be available through

other high schools in the district (similar to ROP offerings), through local community colleges, or through independent study. Through a *junior/senior project seminar* students will engage in service learning and internships in the community and conduct independent study and research in an area of interest, in preparation for their Senior Exhibition (see Student Assessment, above). Students completing the 4-year program will have fully met the a—f course requirements for the University of California as well as the course requirements for the California State University system.

School Organization and Structure. The organizational structure of the school will be designed to support the goals of personalization and authentic pedagogy. The school will be staffed by a team of credentialed teachers, each of whom shares and supports the vision for SVESS as outlined in this document. All teachers will be CLAD-trained, in addition to their subject-area credentials. A teaching intern will be included on each team, collaborating on curriculum and working with students. This additional staffing resource will help support such activities as small group seminar and mentoring, contributing to the in-depth instruction and personalization provided at SVESS. The teaching staff will be supported by an administrative support team consisting of a Principal and an Administrative Coordinator.

Calendar and Schedule. Both the academic calendar and the daily schedule will be designed to support the goals of SVESS. The calendar will accommodate the program's extended curriculum units, with progress reporting and (to the extent possible) vacations organized around the curriculum framework. The daily schedule will also feature extended blocks of time for humanities and math/science coursework, allowing the flexibility to accommodate extended learning activities. The weekly schedule will provide regular time for student mentoring and service-learning, as well as time for the staff to engage in schoolwide planning and collaboration. Time will also be provided in the calendar and schedules for extended field studies, staff professional development, and –at the upper level – student internships.

Development of Budget to Demonstrate the Fiscal Viability of the School. As preparation for developing the SVESS business plan and budget, two members of the Core Planning Team attended the CANEC workshop on charter school finance. In addition, we have begun an in-depth analysis of revenues and expenditures within the current district, as a basis for financial planning and budgeting. As part of the planning process we will collect information on financial planning and budgeting methods utilized by other charter schools (e.g., expenditure models, revenue models). We will then draft an *overall financial plan* that identifies anticipated and potential revenues and includes one-year and five-year *operating budgets* that provide for staff (salaries, benefits); facilities (capital costs, maintenance); instructional supplies, materials, and equipment; and professional development. We propose to negotiate with the district regarding categorical funds (e.g., Title I, Title VII, Special Ed.) and other funds in excess of the revenue limits; we will also negotiate for certain support services (e.g., cost accounting, purchasing, ADA reporting, audit, risk management, legal assistance). In developing this plan we will seek assistance from a specialist in educational finance, to ensure that it complies with accepted fiscal standards and practice.

During first 3 years we anticipate needing additional resources to supplement the above revenues. First, there will almost certainly be a lag of several months between when we begin to

incur costs and when we begin to receive revenue. Also, we know there will be a number of one-time start-up costs, such as facility improvement costs and instructional materials, incurred during the first year. Some of these costs may be covered by revenues subsequently received, but others will need to be capitalized or depreciated over time. In addition, because the school will not be fully enrolled until year three, costs for the first two and one half years will almost certainly exceed revenues. To cover these supplemental costs, we will seek additional support from both public and private sources (e.g., the C-B-E fellowships for curriculum development, the Charter School Loan Fund, foundation grants).

Development of Governance and Management Structures. Our current plan is for SVESS to operate as an charter school within the Fremont Union High School District, and as such will comply with all provisions enacted by the Board of Education of the District regarding charter schools. At the same time, we will explore the potential advantages of becoming an independent nonprofit organization.

In either event, we propose to establish a ***Board of Trustees*** to provide oversight of school policy, management and finance. The Board will also monitor receipt and use of funds for the operation of the school, in accordance with the provisions of the revised California Charter Schools Act (AB 544) and related legislation. The Board will be composed of representatives from the school community and the community at-large, including site teachers and administrators, other professionals and business representatives, and community leaders. In addition, representatives from the student body, parent community, collaborating university partner, local bargaining unit, and authorizing school district will also have formal positions on the Board.

Our operations and management plan will also outline ***site governance structures and procedures***. Democratic practice will be the operating norm for SVESS, and will be manifested in the composition and operations of a School Council. Through the Council, all constituent groups - students, teachers, administrators, parents, and district representatives - will be substantively involved in school policy and program planning. Responsibilities assigned to the School Council will include day-to-day operations, review of school and student instructional needs, curriculum, scheduling, and assessment, personnel and fiscal decisions, and monitoring the school accountability process. Within the Council, *ad hoc* and/or standing committees and task forces will be created to undertake specific tasks and to advise the overall Council.

Planning tasks will include investigating the governance structures and procedures adopted by other charter schools, preparatory to developing an overall ***school operations and management plan*** and selecting individuals to serve on the SVESS Board. As part of this process, we will also seek input on legal issues surrounding charter school management and structure.

Location of and Plans for Maintenance of the School Facilities. One of the more significant planning tasks will be to identify potential locations and facilities for the proposed school. A site will be sought within or adjacent to the Fremont Union High School District, to provide classroom and office space for SVESS staff and students. As indicated above, our preference is to locate in the North Sunnyvale area, in order to provide a (relatively) local school option for students in that part of the community. We will also seek a location in close proximity to local businesses and industries, and to local transportation lines, to support close connections between

the school and the surrounding community. Prior to looking at specific sites, we will develop a list of criteria and specifications that must be met to realize the educational vision outlined above. Using these guidelines, we will then explore with community groups and organizations, giving particular attention to extant but underutilized facilities, such as former school sites, churches, and the former Moffett Field Naval Air Station. Once a location and facility are identified, we will develop a facility use and maintenance plan tailored to that specific site.

Resources to be used for above

1. Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools (BayCES)
2. Santa Clara County Charter School Network
3. California Network of Educational Charters
4. Charter School Development Center
5. Charter School Conferences and Workshops
6. Visits to current and planned charter schools and professional development schools (Frances W. Parker School, International Studies Academy, Leadership High School, Ixcalli School, the Preuss School, High Tech High)
7. Local school districts
8. City Councils and City Planning Offices
9. Local community organization and businesses
10. Consultants in the areas of school law, finance, and accounting.

3. Collaboration and Networking Strategies

Involvement of Parents and Community Members. As indicated above, we view parents as integral partners in the educational process, and will solicit their input and involvement both in the development of the charter proposal as well as in the planning and governance of the school. Two essential initial planning tasks will be to identify one or more parent/community representatives to become part of the ***Core Planning Team*** and to initiate a series of ***community forums*** to provide for ongoing dialogue with the community. Meetings will be held in schools, churches, and other neighborhood facilities and translators will be provided, to encourage minority parents and parents of second-language speakers to participate. In setting up these meetings, we will work through PTSA and Parent Advisory Groups for FUHSD and the local feeder districts.

An important component of the SVESS curriculum will be strong connections with the world outside the school. Not only will we ask students to explore real-world issues and problems in the classroom, we will also utilize the ***community as a learning resource*** through field studies, service-learning, and (eventually) student internships. Further, we would like to bring members of the community into the school as visiting experts, student advisors and mentors, and members of curriculum review and student exhibition panels. To support this goal we will seek to establish partnership relationships with local businesses and community organizations. Finally, we will also explore ways that ***SVESS can serve as a resource to the community*** – for example, through student community service activities.

Collective Knowledge and Experience of Developers/Operators. As noted previously, the SVESS Core Planning Team, comprising a School Principal, five classroom teachers, and a research specialist, brings both breadth and depth of experience and expertise to this planning

effort. In addition to their extensive educational experience, each of these individuals has for the past five years been actively involved in issues of school restructuring and educational reform, which has provided in-depth knowledge regarding the design and development of interdisciplinary curriculum, authentic pedagogy, and standards-based assessment.

- **Richard Knapp** (B.A. '68, M.A. '76, M.A. '87 – Santa Clara University) has served as Principal of Live Oak High School since 1997. He previously served for 12 years as Assistant Principal in FUHSD, where he had major responsibility for curriculum, staff development, master schedule, guidance, and school design and restructuring. He also served as District Curriculum Coordinator and District Science Liaison, and directed the Model Technology project.
- **Dorothy Mansfield** (B.A. '61, M.A. '74, University of Santa Clara) teaches World Cultures (English, Social Studies, Art) as part of the Foundation Integrated Studies Program at Homestead High School and served for five years as the school's Reform Coordinator. She has also served on the California Education Roundtable English Standards Task Force and the Assessment Task Force, the Board of Directors for the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC), and currently is a member of the BASRC School-University Partnership Advisory Board. Mrs. Mansfield has taught for 37 years, including 8 years as a Guidance Counselor; she has served as President of the Homestead Faculty Association, member of the Negotiating Team, and CTA State Council representative.
- **Sharon Olken** (B.A. '93, M.A. '96, Stanford) teaches English and World Cultures at Homestead High School; during 1997-98 she served as Lead Teacher for Homestead's Foundation Integrated Studies Program and was part of the programs curriculum design team. She is also a representative on the School Site Council and the school's liaison with the Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools.
- **Madelene DeRollo** (B.A., '69, San Jose State University) teaches English and Sheltered English, and also taught in the interdisciplinary Science, Technology, and Society program, at Homestead High School. She directs Homestead's involvement in the *Transitions* project, a collaborative project with UC and CSU to design and pilot-test performance-based school transcript formats. Mrs. DeRollo is also a Mentor Teacher at Homestead and has worked as a School Coach for the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative; currently, she is a candidate for an M.A. and Preliminary Administrative Services Credential in the Urban High School Leadership program at San Jose State University.
- **Judi Annan-Roberts** (B.A. '77, M.A. '93, San Jose State University) is a Special Education Resource Teacher in the Foundation Integrated Studies program and teaches a special day class in Math at Homestead. She has qualified for her Preliminary Administrative Services Credential.
- **Nick Ferguson** (B.A. __, M.A. __) teaches History and World Cultures at Homestead High School.
- **Lauri Steel** (B.A. '67; M.A. '69; Ph.D. '88, Stanford) is an educational research and evaluation specialist. For the past five year she has worked as co-Reform Coordinator at Homestead High School and was responsible for planning, evaluation and accountability in connection with the school's reform efforts. Previously she worked for 25 years for the American Institutes for Research, conducting curriculum development, evaluation, and labor market analysis studies; as Director of the Education and Human Development Research Group from 1988 to 1994, she was also responsible for business development and personnel management.

External Means of Technical Support. We have already held preliminary conversations with the Fremont Union High School District, and plan to maintain a collaborative working relationship with the district. As noted above, we will explore the feasibility of contracting with the district for a variety of support services. Working with other developing charter schools, we also plan to contract for outside legal, finance, and accounting expertise in the development and negotiation of the charter proposal.

Partnerships and Networking Systems. The SVESS Core Planning Team has established or is in the process of establishing relationships with a number of strategic partners to support the planning and development of the charter school.

- We have established a partnership with the **Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools**, which provides essential coaching support and technical assistance to schools in the San Francisco Bay Area seeking to embed the Coalition principles in their daily practice.
- We are part of an emerging network of **Santa Clara County Charter Schools**, which provides a forum for exchange of information and for technical support; as the schools evolve, it will also provide a forum for information and support at the district level.
- We are a member of the **California Network of Educational Charters (CANEC)**, which provides information, training, and technical assistance to charter school developers and operators.
- We have met twice with the **Stanford University Teacher Education Program (STEP)** to discuss the feasibility of becoming a Professional Development School affiliated with STEP.

As part of the planning process we will work to consolidate the relationship with STEP and to establish partnership relationships with local business and community organizations.

4. Overall Program Evaluation – Accountability

Program Assessment/Measurements to Evaluate Success. Even more than regular schools, charter schools are held accountable for the quality of the educational program they provide and for the extent to which students learn and benefit from this program. Drawing on the framework developed by the state of Massachusetts, our accountability system will be designed to address three broad questions.

Is the academic program a success? Data on student performance will provide the core of our accountability system and will be proactively used to improve practice and enhance student learning at SVESS (LeMahieu, 1996). As described above, performance expectations will be established for each of the learner outcomes, and student assessments will ***provide data on students' progress toward meeting those standards***. In addition, we will establish schoolwide goals and benchmarks for student performance (e.g., x% of students will achieve proficiency in ___, as measured by ___, by the conclusion of the foundation program). Staff will regularly review and discuss data on student performance and progress toward the schoolwide learning goals as part of the schoolwide planning process. Data will be disaggregated, to examine performance for particular subgroups of students (e.g., entering freshmen, students of color, language-minority students) as well as students overall.

In addition to looking at quantitative assessment data, staff will regularly engage in ***reviewing and reflecting on student work*** as part of the schoolwide planning process. This review will deepen our understanding of the quantitative student performance data and will provide a basis for strengthening practice (are we getting the level and kind of work that we expect? why or why not?). Further, we will periodically invite colleagues from other schools and organizations to serve as critical friends in a ***quality review team process***; teams would be charged with providing an independent evaluation and assessment of the school, its practice, and the work of its students

Is the school a viable organization? Organizational viability will be reflected in the soundness of its business practice and in its demonstrated capacity to deliver a sound educational program. Information on the school's financial status will be reviewed on a regular basis by the SVESS Board, and audited financial reports will be prepared annually. Data on student enrollments and attendance, school facility development and improvement, staffing and staff development, and educational program offerings will also be reviewed on a regular basis. Once established, we will work with the Board to develop a series of performance goals and indicators for each of these areas..

Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter? The charter proposal will identify a number of milestones to be met in the development and operation of the charter school (e.g., hold meetings with the community, establish partnership with institution of higher education). These milestones and the associated timeline will provide a basis for assessing the progress of the school in terms of its charter. Data relating to each milestone will be reviewed by the SVESS Board and by the authorizing agency on an annual basis.

Information relating to each of these broad questions will be summarized in an ***annual performance report*** to the authorizing agency. It will further be shared with the community through an annual ***community accountability review process***. Plans for both processes will be elaborated as part of the charter proposal.

C. Support for Getting the Charter Petition Circulated and Approved

1. Specific Activities and Work that Needs to be Done

Work that Assists in Meeting the Required 14 Elements of the Charter. The Core Planning Team has already made substantial progress in addressing many of the required 14 elements of the charter, as reflected in our preliminary design. This planning process will continue over the next six months, through weekly planning and coordination meetings, meetings with potential partners (STEP, district), visits to other schools, research on charter schools via the Web, and participation in charter school conferences and workshops. We will also begin to engage the community through a series of community forums during the spring and summer. A 5-day planning session will be scheduled at the end of the summer to craft a first draft of the charter proposal. In the fall we will review the draft proposal with members of the various constituent groups, preparatory to revising it and submitting it for approval.

Activities and strategies for the charter approval process. We have already begun conversations with the school district about the proposed charter, and we will continue to keep them apprised of our plans and to solicit their input. We are strongly committed to designing

SVESS to complement and enhance the district offerings, and we want to work collaboratively with the district in this regard. As part of the planning process we will also establish contact with community groups, including City Councils and Chambers of Commerce as well as the feeder schools and districts. Finally, as noted above, we will solicit input from parents and community members through a series of Community Forums. When the draft charter proposal is completed we will take it back to each of these groups to solicit their reactions, comments, and suggestions, which we will use to revise the proposal.

Strategies for recruiting students. While we hope to locate the school in the North Sunnyvale area, students from throughout the district will be invited to consider the option of enrolling in SVESS. The outreach strategies employed in developing the charter proposal should significantly enhance awareness of the school and its program. In addition, we will make presentations at the feeder elementary and junior high schools (as well as at independent middle and junior high schools) and distribute information to local youth groups. Finally, we will issue press releases to the local community newspapers. In all of these presentations and communications we will emphasize that SVESS is one of many attractive options within the district, and that students need to determine which kind of program best suits their individual learning needs and styles.

2. Justification for Use of Grant Funds

Only activities directly related to the development of the charter school design and the charter proposal will be supported through this grant. Funds will be used to cover support the **direct costs** associated with research and investigation into charter school policies and practices (i.e., participation in workshops and conferences, visits to other schools, external legal and financial input and review) where such costs cannot be covered through other channels; in addition, they will support the reproduction and distribution of informational and PR materials. Funds will also be used to provide **planning time** for crafting, reviewing, and submitting the charter proposal. However, we anticipate that additional support will be required once the charter proposal is approved to develop the curriculum and associated student assessments, to support the development of the facility, to acquire the necessary resources and technology, etc. Additional funding from private sources will be sought to cover these costs.

III. SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION OF THE CHARTER PROPOSAL

Evaluation of the Quality of the Charter Proposal. Multiple opportunities for review and feedback have been built into the charter proposal planning and development processes, including input from the various constituent groups for the proposed school as well as from professional colleagues. We will ask our BayCES coaches and the members of the Santa Clara County Charter Schools Network to play a more formal review and feedback role at various points in the process, and we will seek similar support through CANEC. Finally, once established, the SVESS Board of Trustees will have a significant role in reviewing the charter proposal. Reviews will focus on the soundness of the proposal in terms of the educational program and the viability of the plans from a business and organizational perspective.

Timeline for Completion of Specific Tasks. Given the objective of enrolling the first cohorts of student in the fall of the year 2000, we propose to develop and submit our charter proposal by the end of calendar 1999. Figure 1 presents an approximate timeline for this work..

Procedure for Evaluating Quality of Work. Records will be maintained of all planning meetings, conferences, visits, and other activities associated with the development of the charter proposal. Evaluation of the quality of this work will occur on two levels. The project timeline will provide a basis for assessing our **progress** in terms of milestone activities and product development; it will be reviewed on a monthly basis. Provision for review and feedback on draft **products** has also been built into the overall planning process. In addition, we will seek input on both progress and products from our BayCES coaches, from colleagues in the Santa Clara County Charter Schools network, and from the SVESS Board of Trustees.

Adherence to Required Evaluations of the Grant. We will participate in the overall program monitoring and evaluation process, which will include sending at least one representative to each of two CDE meetings plus submission of two written progress reports and copies of our annual performance audit and all final work products. Work products will be provided in both print and electronic format, to facilitate dissemination.

Process for How Grant Money will be Spent. Use of funds will be governed by requirements of the federal law governing the Public Charter Schools Program (CFDA:84.282) and any applicable state requirements.

Figure 1 – Overall Timeline for Planning Activities

Activity	1998-99 School Year						1999-2000 School Year								
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Prelim. Exploration/Design															
Educational vision	x														
Design prospectus			x												
Contacts with district	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Contacts with STEP		x	x		x	x			x	x		x			
Conferences and workshops		x	x							x	x				x
Meetings with other developers	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Visits to other schools			x	x	x				x						
Contacts with local businesses						x	x		x	x			x	x	x
Community meetings				x	x	x	x		x	x	x				
Explore facility locations				x	x	x	x	x							
Drafting the Charter															
Initial draft						x	x	x							
Internal review									x						
Peer & legal reviews									x						
District review									x						
Resolution of issues										x					
Revision of draft											x				
Negotiation & Approval															
Collect petition signatures											x	x			
District/Board submission												x			
Appeal (if necessary)													x	x	x
Solicit add'l funding support				x	x	x				x	x		x	x	x

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Projected Budget	Total	Grant
1000 Cert Salaries		
Visits to other schools (10 days @ \$100)	\$1,000	\$1,000
Summer planning stipends (8 @ \$1,000)	\$8,000	\$4,000
Staff release-1999/2000		
Team leader (.2 FTE)	\$14,000	\$1,000
Curriculum leader -.4 FTE	\$12,000	\$6,000
Team members (6 @ 10 days @ \$100)	<u>\$6,000</u>	<u>\$3,000</u>
TOTAL	\$41,000	\$15,000
2000 Class salaries		
none		
3000 Emp. Benefits		
	8000	\$3,000
4000 Books, Supplies		
Office supplies	\$500	\$500
Books	\$500	\$500
5000 Services		
Resource/Evaluation specialist (.2 FTE)	\$12,000	\$6,000
Legal and financial consulting	\$2,500	\$2,500
Reproduction	\$1,500	\$1,500
Telephone/Postage	\$500	\$500
Training Workshops & Conferences (fees, travel)	\$7,500	\$5,000
Travel - visits to other schools (10 @ \$50)	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>
TOTAL	\$23,000	\$16,000
6000 Capital outlay		
none		
7000 Other outlay		
none		